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E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/06/2016

TAGS: [EPET](#) [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [KHLs](#) [PINR](#) [KS](#) [NI](#) [DELTA](#) [VIOLENCE](#)

SUBJECT: SHELL GAS PLANT ATTACKED: SOME DEATHS; 5 KOREAN, 1
NIGERIAN CONTRACTOR KIDNAPPED

Classified By: Consul General Brian L. Browne for Reason 1.4 (D/E).

1. (SBU) A Shell Petroleum Development Company gas plant in Chawthorne Channel, near Port Harcourt, Rivers State, was attacked Wednesday, June 7 at 0100. Press reported between five and nine deaths among government security forces when armed assailants attacked their houseboat. Military sources have not yet confirmed these fatalities. Shell and the Korean Embassy confirmed five South Korean Daewoo and Korean Gas contractors and one Nigerian employee, all working on a Shell project, were kidnapped.

2. (SBU) An email purported to be from the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), stated the attack was due to the GON's continued incarceration of Dokubo Asari, leader of the Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force (NDPVF), on treason charges. The email offered to exchange the hostages for Asari and stated attacks on oil facilities would increase in the coming weeks unless Asari was freed. (Comment: On June 6, a court in Abuja denied Asari's bail request. This decision likely sparked the attack. End comment.)

3. (C) Korean Embassy First Secretary Tok-Won Lee confirmed to us the five Korean hostages are: Chang-Ahn Park, Ok-Kyu Kim, Hyuk-Jun Kim, Sang-Bom Kim, and Hee-Dong Kim, and confirmed with Daewoo representatives there were no Korean national fatalities. The Korean mission has had no communication from the kidnappers. Shell has evacuated all non-essential personnel from its gas facility.

4. (SBU) We have no reports of Amcits involved in the recent attack. However, post is in touch with several American oil service companies operating in immediate vicinity of Chawthorne Channel, and will continue to exchange updates and monitor their security situation.

5. (SBU) Post is in contact with the Korean Mission in Lagos and we are attempting to facilitate their contact with GON officials.

6. (C) Comment: This attack was brusque and bloody even by the rough standards of the Niger Delta. Clearly, some Ijaw militants are angry that Dokubo Asari is still detained and that the GON has not appeared to be visibly active in honoring its promises to launch an economic development initiative for the Niger Delta. What is also apparent is that some faction of MEND is involved. What is less clear is if the architects of this attack belong to the Federated Niger Delta Ijaw Communities (FNDIC)-based segment of MEND that usually operates in Delta State and Rivers State. FNDIC orchestrated the January and February hostage takings and the February attacks on oil installations that have reduced Nigeria's output by a quarter. Since then, FNDIC has been quiescent, stating it will abide an informal cease-fire in order to give the GON time to honor its economic development vows. FNDIC involvement in this latest incident would mean that it has discarded the informal cease-fire. If so, this incident may be a prelude to even more attacks against workers and possibly installations. End comment.
BROWNE